

*Discovering God's Presence and  
Purpose in Your Tomorrow*

STUDY GUIDE | SIX SESSIONS

DR. DAVID JEREMIAH  
WITH DUDLEY DELFFS



W PUBLISHING GROUP

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*Forward Study Guide*

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# Introduction

As a follower of Jesus, you are called to look ahead and move forward with power, passion, and purpose. But this can be challenging when adverse circumstances, trials, and uncertainties cloud your view. When overcast skies impede your vision, you may struggle to see clearly and distinctly what lies around the corner. You may lose sight of your divine destination or worry that you overlooked opportunities to become who God created you to be. You may feel stuck at times and struggle to get back on track so you can move forward.

However, God always knows where you are going, and He has promised to never abandon you on your journey. He can lift you up and guide you back into His perfect plan if you are willing to trust in Him. No matter what season of life in which you find yourself, the Bible says that when you “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33), your future will always be unfolding at the speed of His grace. This was the apostle Paul’s attitude when he declared, “I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking *forward* to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us” (Philippians 3:13–14 NLT, emphasis added).

God is waiting to use you right *now* for His purposes. Your life is far from finished. It is just beginning! Toward this end, I see six actions in Scripture that will enable you to build momentum as you press forward: *dream*, *focus*, *risk*, *pursue*, *believe*, and *finish*. I believe these six steps will inspire your heart, clarify your mind, and energize your body as you press ahead.

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## Forward Study Guide

The pathway will not always be easy. You will need to cast off pessimism and overcome adversity, just like the heroes described in the book of Revelation, who were determined to “follow the Lamb wherever He goes” (Revelation 14:4). The road will be rocky at times, and you will be tempted to doubt the way. However, as you persevere, your progress will yield eternal dividends—both here on earth and when you are rewarded in heaven.

It is my hope that this study will enable you to rediscover, reset, and renew your trust in God as you move into the next chapter that He has waiting for you. Whether you are young in years or young at heart, stuck in a rut or being pulled in every direction, overwhelmed by responsibilities or seeking a new assignment, this study will give you the fuel, fortitude, and faculties you need to move forward.

God always provides a way to remain steady in your faith and trust Him for the next step. As you discover the joy in your journey, you will see how the example of Jesus sets the pace and empowers your endurance. Your best is yet to come. So let’s get started!

# How to Use This Guide

The *Forward* video study is designed to be experienced in a group setting such as a Bible study, Sunday school class, or small group gathering. Each session begins with a brief “Welcome” section and opening questions to get you thinking about the topic. The group will then watch the video message from Dr. David Jeremiah and engage in a time of directed discussion. You will close each session with a time of personal reflection and prayer as a group.

During the week, you can maximize the impact of the study by engaging in the “Between-Sessions Personal Study” activities provided for that week. Treat each personal study section (*Face Forward*, *Step Forward*, *Move Forward*) like a devotional, using the material in whatever way works best. Note that these personal study sections are not required, but they will be beneficial to you as you look at the six key steps covered in the study on how to move forward to accomplish your God-given dreams. Beginning in session two, there will be an opportunity to share any thoughts, questions, or takeaways you have from your personal study.

Each person in the group should have his or her own copy of this study guide. You are also encouraged to have a copy of the *Forward* book. Reading the book alongside the curriculum will provide additional insights and make the journey even more meaningful. To help you use both the book and this study, refer to the “For Next Week” section for a list of the chapters in *Forward* that correspond to the following week’s session.

## Forward Study Guide

Keep in mind the video, discussion questions, and activities are simply tools to help you engage with each week's lesson. Furthermore, as you go through the study, be in prayer that God will help you to apply these words from the apostle Paul to your life: "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. . . . One thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12-14).

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**Note:** *If you are a group leader, there are additional resources provided in the back of this guide to help you lead your group members through the study.*

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## Session One

# Dream

*Seize Your Tomorrow Today*

*A dream is simply a picture of what you feel God wants you to do next.*

DR. DAVID JEREMIAH

### Welcome

Each of us has dreams for our lives. These dreams motivate us to take risks, make sacrifices, overcome obstacles, and persevere through adversity. Whether we want to advance in our careers, complete our education, provide comfort and security for our families, or use our talents in ways that make a positive difference, we all dream and hope for more.

However, it is important for these dreams to be aligned with God's will. If we are merely chasing after a self-made vision of our own creation, we will never find true satisfaction—even if we make our vision a reality. God has created each one of us for *His* unique purposes, and He plants dreams inside us that we can never realize on our own. He wants us to walk by faith and trust Him to do what we consider impossible.

The Bible is filled with stories of men and women who saw what life could look like in God's kingdom . . . and then took the steps necessary to move forward in faith. Abraham dreamed of a great nation when he was yet childless. Moses envisioned a free people when the Israelites were still making bricks without straw. Joshua envisioned an occupied land. David dreamed of a temple on a hill. Nehemiah built miles of walls in his prayers before a single stone was laid. Daniel glimpsed a future kingdom. Peter an established Church. Paul a global mission.

All these stories—the dreams of men and women of God thousands of years ago—still guide, inspire, and apply to us. They remind us to keep dreaming, knowing there is always more ahead. They reveal how our experiences today can prepare us for God's purposes tomorrow.

## Share

If you or any of your group members are just getting to know one another, take a few minutes to introduce yourselves. Then discuss one of the following questions:

- What immediately comes to mind when you consider the dreams you have for your life? How do you view those dreams?

— *or* —

- What famous dreamers from the past have inspired you personally? How have their dreams motivated you to persevere?

## Dream

### Read

Invite someone in the group to read the following passage as everyone listens. Then turn to the person on your left and answer the questions that follow.

*For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, “This man began to build and was not able to finish”? Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.*

LUKE 14:28–33

Why is it important to count the cost of pursuing a dream before you begin?

How do you weigh the need to count the cost of a dream with the requirement to risk and step out in faith to pursue it?

## Watch

Play the video for session one. As you watch, use the following outline to record any thoughts, questions, or key points that stand out to you.

## Notes

One of the best examples of dream-building in the Bible is the story of King David's vision to build a temple atop of Mount Moriah. Israel was now occupying the land God had promised, and David dreamed of a permanent place where people could worship for centuries to come. His story reveals five principles we can follow as we seek to build our own dreams.

**Principle #1: Root Your Dream in History.** Consider the dreams of those who have gone before you. Think about your heritage, background, passions, and life experiences. Start where you are and work outward and forward.

**Principle #2: Reproduce Your Dream in a Picture.** Create a plan for moving from the abstract to the concrete. Think about the resources you will need to build your dream.

**Principle #3: Reinforce Your Dream with Determination.**

Assume you will encounter obstacles and unexpected problems as you bring your dream to life. Plan for them as best you can, but even when you can't see a way forward, remain determined and trust God to make a way.

**Principle #4: Reconcile Your Dream with Its Cost.** Anticipate the sacrifices required and the perseverance needed to fulfill your dream. Think through your resources—time, energy, money, creativity—and the stamina needed to endure conflict, criticism, and calamity.

**Principle #5: Release Your Dream to Your Legacy.** When you faithfully pursue the dreams God gives you, your earthly investment will have an eternal return. It is possible to achieve something after your death that could not have been achieved during your life.

## Discuss

Take a few minutes with your group members to discuss what you just watched and explore these concepts in Scripture. Use the following questions to help guide your discussion.

## Forward Study Guide

1. Why is it important to have your dream rooted in history? How does considering the historical context of your dreams help you understand your part in God's plans?
2. What happens if you don't reproduce your dream in a picture? How can your blueprint help you make the transition from a general concept to a concrete reality?
3. What obstacles did David have to overcome in pursuit of his dream of building the temple? What does his example teach us about the importance of determination as we push through obstacles and setbacks?
4. How will you "count the cost" when it comes to the dreams that God has given you? In what ways does counting the cost help you formulate a plan for realizing your dream?



## Dream

5. What do you hope the legacy of your dreams will be? How will the dreams you are pursuing now help to advance God's kingdom for eternity?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Which of the contemporary examples cited in the teaching resonate with you the most? How does the person's story inspire you to pursue your own dreams?



## Respond



As your group concludes this first session, reflect for a moment on how you would describe the current dreams God has placed on your heart. Where are you on the journey of realizing your dreams? How has God sustained you this far? What is needed as you now move forward?

## Forward Study Guide

### **Pray**

As your first session concludes, go around the room and share any personal prayer requests. Spend a few minutes lifting up one another's requests and asking God to use your time together in the coming sessions to help each person move forward.

# Between-Sessions Personal Study

Between your group sessions, you are invited to further explore the material covered this week by engaging the following between-sessions activities. (For this first study, you might find it helpful to read chapters 1 and 2 in *Forward*, if you have not done so already.) In these exercises and activities, you will be encouraged to *face forward* by reflecting on a passage or selection of verses from God's Word before you *step forward* and consider ways to apply the material from the previous session. You can then *move forward* to implement what you are learning. To make the most of these studies, record your responses and reflections within each section and make notes in your guide about your experience. You will have an opportunity to share these notes and reflections with other group members at the beginning of the next session.

## Face Forward

As you reflect on the dreams that God has planted in your heart, consider the dreams that He gave to the men and women in the pages of Scripture. God's Word is filled with people who saw what life could look like in His kingdom and moved forward in faith. Many of these individuals faced adversity that required them to patiently wait on God and His

timing. Just consider the story of Joseph. At a young age, he had dreams, but of the more literal kind—dreams that implied his family would one day be bowing before him.

As you might imagine, this didn't go over well with Joseph's brothers. The fact he was his father's favorite also did not help matters. Ultimately, the brothers threw him into a pit and sold him to a group of traders headed for Egypt. When Joseph arrived, he continued to suffer injustices and even ended up in jail. But it was at this lowest point in his life that he met a man who would change his future. The chief butler to Pharaoh, the ruler of the land, had also been thrown in jail. Joseph foretold that he would be released—and he made a simple request for the man to remember him after he was freed. Here is what happens next:

*Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river. Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the river. And the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke. . . . Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh.*

*Then the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: "I remember my faults this day. When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, both me and the chief baker, we each had a*

## Dream

*dream in one night, he and I. Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream. Now there was a young Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams for us; to each man he interpreted according to his own dream. And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him.” . . .*

*Then Joseph said to Pharaoh . . . “This is the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do. Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it will be very severe.”*

GENESIS 41:1-4, 8-13, 25, 28-31

Pharaoh immediately put Joseph in charge of the preparations for the famine and raised him to second-in-command in all the land. Eventually, Joseph was reunited with his brothers, and a reconciliation took place. Looking back, Joseph could truthfully declare to them, “You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive” (Genesis 50:20). Looking back on *your* life, how has God used painful events and situations to move you closer to your dreams, even though you couldn’t see it at the time?

Looking back, how do you see that God used these situations from your past to benefit *others*?

### Step Forward

King David is another example of an individual in the pages of the Bible who had great dreams. After settling into his palace, he told the prophet Nathan, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains” (2 Samuel 7:2). David recognized that he enjoyed a permanent home while the Ark of the Covenant lacked a permanent earthly dwelling place.

The king had reached a point in his life when he knew it was time to focus on something that would endure beyond his lifetime. However, this idea for building a temple did not occur just in the moment. David’s dream was conceived centuries before when God told Abraham to offer his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice and burnt offering on a distant mountain. God was specific about that mountain, specifying that it had to be Mount Moriah (see Genesis 22:2).

A thousand years later, when the Israelites set the first stone of the new temple, they placed it on that very mountain, Mount Moriah (see 2 Chronicles 3:1). The roots of David’s vision thus ran deep—grounded in the story of Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his only son as a burnt offering (see Hebrews 11:17-19). And it’s no coincidence that a

## Dream

thousand years after David, Jesus gave Himself as an offering for sin on or near that very same hill. Everything was linked—from Abraham and his altar, to David and his temple, to Christ and His cross—historically and symbolically. Each event built on the events preceding it.

Our best dreams don't start with us or our own plans for doing something great. The best dreams come from God. He allows us to be part of something much bigger and better than anything we could ever imagine. We serve as bridge builders between the dreams that have gone before us and the legacy we leave for future generations.

What are some dreams that God planted in your heart at a young age? How have you pursued them? What have been the outcomes?

Which dreams have left you frustrated, confused, or uncertain as you have attempted to pursue them? Have you abandoned some of them? Why?

How have your dreams changed as your faith in God has grown? What new dreams has the Lord been planting in your soul? What steps have you taken to realize these dreams?

## Move Forward

Your dream may be one you have been developing your entire life, or it may be a newly realized dream you are just considering. It could be something with an obvious impact on the world around you, or a dream with benefits for just a small group at present. Regardless of how big or small your dream seems, it is important to begin the process of realizing it. Review the five categories discussed during this week's teaching on how you can start to bring a dream to life. Answer the following questions and then identify one action step to keep moving forward.

### *Root Your Dream in History*

What is your own personal history with this dream?

What precedents or foundational pieces are you building on?

How does your dream build on the dreams of those who came before you?

### *Reproduce Your Dream in a Picture*

Have you ever created a blueprint, written plan, list, or picture for this dream? If so, where are you in the process of its development? If not, what are you waiting on?

Once you have your dream-print, ask someone you trust to review it with you. How can they help you move forward with its implementation?

Based on your tangible dream plan, choose a picture, drawing, Bible verse, or other reminder and post it in a spot where you will see it daily. Use it as a reminder to pray for what's needed in the process as you bring this dream to life.

### *Reinforce Your Dream with Determination*

What obstacles have you anticipated (or already encountered) in pursuit of this dream? How are you prepared to overcome them?

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On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being “rarely” and 10 being “almost always,” how would you rate your track record for following through on most projects, goals, and assignments?

Depending on the score you gave, what do you need in order to follow through on your dream with more determination, dedication, and diligence?

What tends to deter or impede your determination to fulfill this God-given dream?

What do you need to hand over to God and entrust to Him?

### *Reconcile Your Dream with Its Cost*

What has pursuing this dream cost you already? How have you measured this cost?

## Dream

What sacrifices do you need to make in order to move forward to achieve this dream?

When have you been forced to trust God to provide what you needed for realizing this dream? How did He provide?

What resources do you need (or anticipate needing) in order to achieve your dream?

### *Release Your Dream to Your Legacy*

What are you investing in your dream that will yield an eternal legacy?

How will your dream advance God's kingdom, both now and after your life on earth has ended?

How will your dream bless and benefit future generations?

What is required for this dream to outlive you?

After reviewing and answering these questions, fill in the following:

Currently, I need to focus most on \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ in order to  
advance my dream. One immediate action step I can  
take toward advancing my dream is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

### For Next Week

If you are reading *Forward* as you go through this study, read chapter 3, “Choose: Diminish Your Distractions,” and chapter 4, “Focus: Make Your One Thing the Main Thing,” in preparation for next week. Use the space below to write any key insights or questions from your personal study that you want to discuss at the next group meeting.



*stay connected to the teaching of*  
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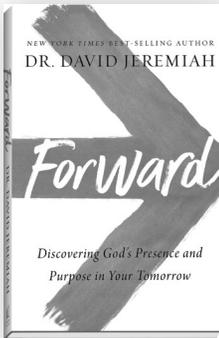
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## FURTHER YOUR STUDY OF THIS BOOK

### *FORWARD* RESOURCE MATERIALS

To enhance your study on this important topic, we recommend the correlating book, audio message album, and DVD messages from the *Forward* series.



#### ***Forward***

Learn even more about moving forward in life through reading *Forward: Discovering God's Presence and Purpose in Your Tomorrow*, the correlating book from Dr. Jeremiah.



#### **Audio Message Album**

The material found in this study guide originates from messages presented by Dr. Jeremiah at Shadow Mountain Community Church where he serves as senior pastor. These ten messages are conveniently packaged in an accessible audio album.



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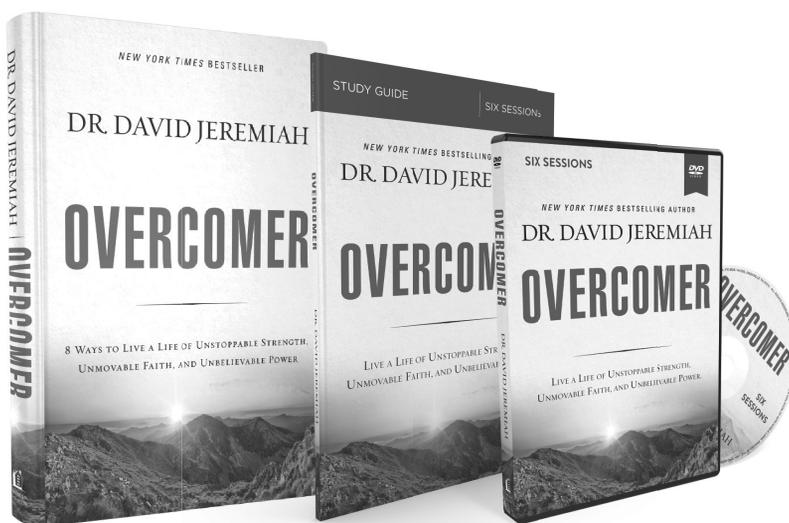
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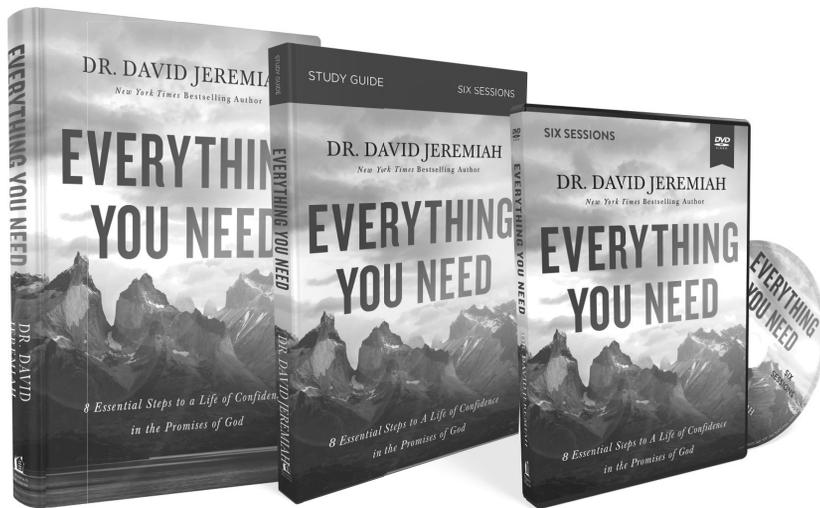
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In this six-session video Bible study, bestselling author Dr. David Jeremiah draws on 2 Peter 1:3–11 to show how there is help at your fingertips—help that will give you everything you need to walk life’s trail with resilience and strength. While many Christians feel unprepared to walk the journey of faith, you can be assured that God has provided the tools you need to guide your way—resources such as virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. You can live in confidence because of His promises!

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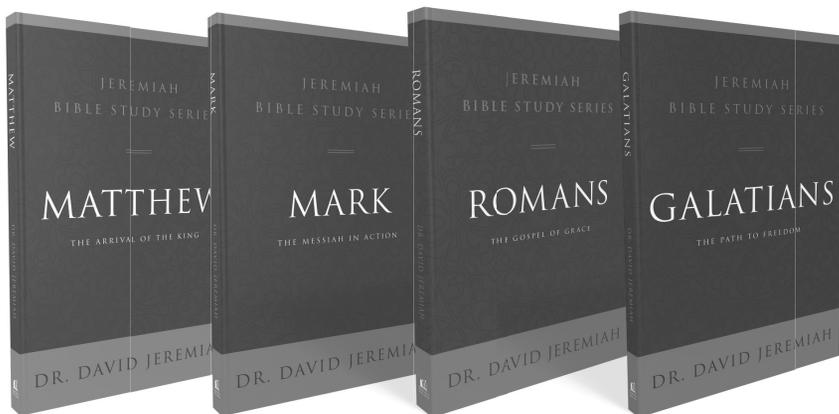
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